



Chapter 3: Prevention/Early Intervention Recommendations

Prevention strategies focus on protecting individuals from becoming a victim or perpetrator of abuse. They also include strategies that ensure that laws, regulations and services allow individuals to live in communities that demonstrate intolerance of abuse.

Early intervention strategies focus services on individuals who have already been exposed to abuse and provide them with support, information and resources that aim to prevent the violence from continuing. Strategies include ensuring that communities provide access to services that help individuals reduce the negative consequences of experiencing the abuse and that aid them in leaving an abusive relationship or in getting the help they need to stop the abuse.

Recommendations

Prevention/Early Intervention

The earlier that a family is screened for domestic or sexual violence, the sooner that families can receive the help they need to stop the violence. Ideal settings to screen for exposure to violence include health care providers, Child Protective Services, behavioral health providers, faith-based institutions, schools, and other systems that have regular interaction with families. At a minimum, personnel in these systems need appropriate training on how to identify domestic and sexual violence and information on where families can be referred when issues are identified.

Prevention/Early Intervention: 3.1

Encourage agencies and systems that have regular contact with families to routinely screen for exposure to domestic and sexual violence and assess for needed services.

Prevention/Early Intervention: 3.2

Provide schools and youth agencies with evaluated, approved and standardized violence prevention curriculum that can be used to educate children and teens about the dynamics of domestic violence and healthy relationships.

Anyone can become a victim or perpetrator of violence, and reaching kids in settings they normally attend is an effective way to help them to know how to stay safe and understand healthy relationships. Schools, after school programs, childcare programs and grassroots and community-based programs are ideal settings for educating children about the dynamics of healthy relationships through age-appropriate standardized violence prevention curriculum. Some examples of effective violence prevention programs are Breaking the Cycle out of Tucson, Bullying Prevention programs by the Men's Anti-violence Network (MAN), and the PAVE and BRAVE programs which are provided through the Maricopa County area school systems.

Prevention/Early Intervention: 3.3

Encourage faith-based institutions to create awareness among their congregations on domestic and sexual violence, to provide appropriate responses and resources to individuals who disclose abuse, and get involved in community efforts that aim to prevent violence against women.

Two out of every 3 Americans are affiliated with a religious, spiritual, or faith-based group or organization and 1 out of every 4 is an active member. Due to their large member bases, faith-based institutions are uniquely positioned to champion efforts to end violence against women and girls. Because they are considered a safe place for families to interact, faith-based institutions can also relay messages of safety and support for victims and information on offender accountability. Faith-based communities can respond by educating the congregation through sermons, participation in awareness month activities, community events, and monthly newsletters. In the last several years, the Arizona faith community has undertaken significant efforts to train clergy and lay leaders to recognize and address the signs of abuse within their congregates. It is important that these training efforts continue.



According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, "vulnerable adult" is defined as a person who is either being mistreated or in danger of being mistreated or neglected, and who, because of age and/or disability, is unable to protect him/herself. "There are nearly 17,000 nursing homes in the United States that currently care for 1.6 million residents — a figure expected to quadruple to 6.6 million residents by 2050" (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform- Minority Office.) Eye witness accounts and surveys have sadly shown that nursing home abuse and neglect is a serious problem, and that there also is significant underreporting. Major underlying causes of elder mistreatment, according to findings of the National Academy of Sciences Panel to Review Risk and Prevalence of Elder Abuse and Neglect, are: stressful working conditions, staff shortages, staff burnout, and inadequate staff training.

In addition to nursing homes, elder or vulnerable adults who are cared for by family members are also susceptible to abuse. In fact, 90% of reported cases of elder abuse are committed by a family member. Family members need support to deal with the stress of having an older parent or vulnerable adult living with them. They need to be able to identify the warning signs of abuse and to know where to get help for themselves and/or the victims of abuse.

Prevention/Early Intervention: 3.4

Raise public awareness about the problem of elder and vulnerable adult abuse.

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U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform - Minority Office.



Prevention/Early Intervention: 3.5

Encourage employers to be proactive in response to domestic violence experienced by their employees and to be leaders in the community promoting violence prevention.

Domestic violence is estimated to cost employers between \$3 and \$5 billion annually in health care costs, absenteeism, security and other related costs. Employers can be an important ally and support system for their employees and can do the following to support employees who may be experiencing domestic violence, including: adopting policies on domestic violence in the workplace; regularly providing training to human resources directors, management, and employees on issues related to domestic violence; and ensuring that resource information is available for employees. Networks such as the Employer's Against Domestic Violence (EADV), which was started in Maricopa County in 1999 and now has over 100 employers as members, are effective in creating public awareness, raising money for programs, and providing resources to other employers. EADV has plans to expand statewide.

Prevention/Early Intervention: 3.6

Raise awareness through the media and community efforts.

Media and community education campaigns have proven to be tremendously effective in addressing many types of public health and safety hazards such as drunk driving, cigarette smoking and breast cancer screening. Media and community awareness campaigns can serve a vital role by providing critical information for potential victims and abusers as well as engaging other members of the community in a show of public intolerance for domestic and sexual violence. In addition, it is important that campaigns are designed to be ongoing, culturally and linguistically relevant, and age-appropriate. In order to reach the largest possible audiences, media campaigns and community efforts should be easily reproducible in formats that are easy to display, such as posters and brochures, as well as utilizing radio and television public service announcements.

